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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF SEXTIL PUŞCARIU WITH ALF LOMBARD

From the vaste correspondence of Sextil Puşcariu with foreign linguists we shall stop at the letters sent to Alf Lombard (archived in the University Library of Lund) and his answers (archived at Sextil Puşcariu Institute in Cluj, donated by Magdalena Vulpe, the scholar's niece, before her death). At Lund University Library there can also be found the correspondence of Alf Lombard with other Romanian linguists, starting with Ovid Densusianu and continuing with Sever Pop, Al. Procopovici, Iorgu Iordan and, especially with Al. Rosetti, with whom he will have a close friendship until his death.

We have in front of our eyes the correspondence between a master – Sextil Puşcariu – at the top of his career and a young researcher, extremely talented, who will become, as it has been said, "probably the most important Romanist outside our country".

The letters reflect, even by the manner of addressing, the evolution of their relations, which evolve from an official tone to one of friendship and real affection. Alf Lombard starts by addressing Puşcariu with "Sir". "Professor", "Dear Professor" and comes to "Dear and beloved Professor", "Dear and esteemed Professor" and Sextil Puşcariu answers, in the beginning by "Dear Sir", continues with "Esteemed colleague" and, finally, writes "Dear colleague and friend".

After a first letter of Sextil Puşcariu in Romanian, the correspondence was carried mainly in German, Sextil Puşcariu's favorite language, which Alf Lombard knew very well. Alf Lombard was a great polyglot: his former disciple, Heinz Hoffmann, who literally worshiped him, used to say that Alf Lombard spoke fluently 12 languages; it is certain that he knew very well, the two (we could say) mother tongues: French (the mother tongue of his father) and Swedish (the mother tongue of his mother), so besides German and English and the rest of the other Scandinavian languages, he knew very well three more Romance languages: Italian, Spanish and Romanian and two Slavic languages (Czech and Russian, the former being the language spoken in the family during his first marriage).

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Alf Lombard's first letter was not preserved; we have found at Lund a draft in French, dated 11. III. 1935, in which he asked for I. Olimpiu Ştefanovici-Svensk's paper on compared phonetics of English and Romanian, which he had found cited in Puşcariu's magazine, "Dacoromania".

The letters sent by Sextil Puşcariu, 11 to be more precise, together with several post cards and greeting cards, cover a period of 12 years, from 1935 to 1947 and reveal interesting information, often precious and little known pieces of information for the history of Romance and Romanian linguistics.

In his first letter, dated 22. III. 1935, Sextil Puşcariu thanks Alf Lombard for the volume – the volume entitled *La prononciation du roumain* – to which, besides some brief observations, Puşcariu adds: "the most heartfelt congratulations: rarely have I seen such a clear and complete presentation" and promises to write a review in DR VIII, which was to be edited by E. Petrovici. He adds that the two researchers of Romania's Linguistic Atlas, – Emil Petrovici and S. Pop – "were glad to find in your paper the confirmation of some observations previously made in their investigations in Muntenia".

Here it is important to make an observation:

Alf Lombard realized, even from the beginning of his activity as a Romanist, the importance of the Romanian language, its usefulness for comparative studies in completing the overall image of Romance languages and for a better understanding of their Romance character. Just as it is stated in the preface of the first volume of the work *Le verbe roumain* (Lund, 1954), comparative research that does take into consideration the eastern Latinity is, to say at least, incomplete. He made a suggestive comparison, which later became very famous: a comparative study that would neglect Romanian can be compared to a table with three chairs: the three Romance sister languages: French, Spanish and Italian – and the fourth, Romanian, is missing.

The interest for Romanian determines Alf Lombard to make, in December 1934, his first study trip to Bucharest where, recommended by his professor from Uppsala, Erich Staaf, is met with great kindness by Ov. Densusianu. The result of this trip is the study of descriptive phonetics *La pronunciation du roumain*, published at Uppsala in 1935, which presents the language of cultivated citizens of Bucharest, as he mentioned that the subject of the survey was a student, recommended by Ov. Densusianu, and who will remain a close friend, the later literary critic Augustin Z. N. Pop.

Although in his answer letter from 4 I. 1936 Alf Lombard apologizes for his lack of courage to express his thanks in Romanian, "a language more familiar to my eyes and ears rather than to my pen", he actually mastered Romanian very well, which is immediately noticed by the reviewers of his paper – A. Graur (in BL, 1935, pp. 191–193) and Emil Petrovici (in DR VIII, 1936, pp. 269-272) – who underline the usefulness of this complete study on Romanian pronunciation.

The Linguistic Congress in Copenhagen in 1936 offers the occasion of a first meeting between Sextil Puşcariu and Alf Lombard and enables them to exchange

information regarding their immediate scientific activity as well as future projects. Alf Lombard's next trip will have as target Cluj, "the philological activity of which I had been remotely following. I am among your earnest readers", he says in the letter from 4 I. 1936.

Sextil Puşcariu, busy to edit The Romanian Linguistic Atlas, which he had presented at Copenhagen, receives with great joy the news that the Academy of Uppsala will make a subscribtion to the Atlas. He asks Alf Lombard for information on libraries, academies and foundations in Sweden where could be sent the prospect of the Atlas, for subscriptions (according to the letter from November 27, 1936).

On the other hand, besides the exchange of extracts from personal papers, Alf Lombard asks for support in order to obtain from the Romanian Academy books necessary in developing the study of the Romanian language at the University of Sweden. On October 16, 1936 he gave at Uppsala the first course in Romanian – the first not just at this university, but the first in the Scandinavian countries.

He gathered a number of Romanian books "that could form the modest foundation of a Romanian library and which is at the disposal of my students at any moment", Lombard writes in the letter from September 28, 1939. Due to his constant care and through the donations made by the Romanian Academy, this will become the largest and most well – stocked Romanian library across the Scandinavian space. But, alas, it had a pretty unhappy destiny. The beginnings of this exceptional Romanian fond are, in this way, very well discussed in the correspondence between the two philologists, a reconstruction of the road from intention to fact being possible. Of course, then as now one of the most important obstacles was excessive bureaucracy or in Puşcariu's weighed terms: "In case you haven't received the books, it is due to the slowness with which the Romanian Academy works" (letter from November 27, 1936).

Also, in the same letter from September 28, 1939, Alf Lombard informs Sextil Puşcariu of the fact that he is working on a study on *ecce* and his reflexes in the entire Romance area. For the Romanian forms, he would like information from the Dictionary's folder and he does not lose hope that he will actually obtain the volumes of the Dictionary already published. Sextil Puşcariu sends him, through his collaborators, all the information requested on Romanian language. The manuscript of this very well-documented work, which, for unknown reasons, remained unpublished (one of the causes could be the idea of perfection that dominated Lombard's thought and action) can be found today in the archives of the University Library of Lund and would fully deserve the consideration of a specialist. The scientific editing of this manuscript for an eventual publication would be, we consider, a very appropriate PhD thesis for a young Romanist, as Alf Lombard extracted, over the coming decades, until the 80s of the last century, a tremendous quantity of complementary material that can be easily integrated in the study already compiled in 1936.

As it results from the letter dated 11 12. 36, the lectures on Romanian that he started earlier that year enjoyed a great success among the students. He had 37

students taking this class, a very large number, given the fact that it is a language little known, “marginal” (situated, interestingly, by A. L., on a par with “Spanish, Polish and Hungarian”), but he tries to keep their interest alive through a very rich program. The Romanian delegation at Stockholm as well as the University’s board have supported his efforts, Alf Lombard says in the letter quoted above and refers to certain “delicate issues” concerning the history of researches of Romanian language, which cannot be others than those regarding the time, and, especially the formation territory of the Romanian language and people. In the conditions in which, in 1936, the revisionist and irredentist Hungary was leading an aggressive propaganda for the “historical rights” on Transylvania, reviving and emphasizing Rössler’s theories, to which Romanian linguists and historians opposed unquestionable historical, archeological and linguistic arguments, Alf Lombard did not hesitate to directly express his solidarity: “Please, be convinced that, as far as I am concerned, I am sympathetic with researches conducted by the Romanian side in these delicate issues”.

In the following letters, Sextil Puscariu expresses his satisfaction for the news concerning the course of lectures on Romanian and wishes him only success, offering to help him in all respects with information and documentary material, books, extracts and so on.

The last letter sent by Alf Lombard is dated 20. 12. 38 and expresses his thanks for the way he was met in Cluj in June 1938, during his second journey to Romania; at the same time, he informs Sextil Puşcariu that he was named on 16. 12. 38 professor of Romance linguistics at the University of Lund.

During his journey to Romania and especially during the period he spent in Cluj, Sextil Puşcariu took personal interest in his guest in order to provide a very useful and nice stay – by letting him a University apartment and by helping him to obtain a free monthly first class pass for all Romanian trains, with the purpose of helping him to travel extensively so that he would get to know better the country.

Sextil Pușcariu, together with his close collaborators, E. Petrovici and Sever Pop (two of “my people” as Puşcariu used to name them in this correspondence, i.e. his collaborators from the Romanian Language Museum and from the University of Cluj) did his best to introduce Lombard deeper in the research methods of Cluj school. Here, among others, he made, as expressed by Lombard in his *Minnen* (unpublished), “dialectal-geographical journeys”, this meaning that he participated at some dialectal surveys conducted by Emil Petrovici.

Since 1939 we only have Sextil Puşcariu’s letters to Lombard; the answers from Lombard were probably lost.

In both letters of that year, Sextil Puşcariu offered to send a copy from the first volume of the Atlas, so that Alf Lombard could write a presentation to a Nordic or German publication. Later, he said that he would prefer a publication with a larger audience, such as “Revue de linguistique romane” or “Neuphilologische Mitteilungen”. It is to be remarked that almost each and every letter written by

Sextil Puşcariu covers a linguistic issue: either the etymology of the word *întuneca* or *we,* or the fate of *păstor* in Romanian in the confrontation with *cioban*, *mocan*, *păcurar*, *văcar*, *oier*, *căprar* and so on.

In the letter dated 12. 11. 39 he informs him of the publication of the first volume of his paper *Romanian Language.* "In those times (on 1st September 1939 Germany had attacked Poland, unleashing the Second World War) the only possibility of maintaining an inward equilibrium is by focusing on a big paper. So, laboremus!". But the tragedy was just at the beginning. In the letter dated 26. 1. 41, on a very formal tone he informs him about the Treaty of Vienna and the displacement of the Museum to Sibiu.

"Berlin – Charlottenburg 9
AHORNALLE 22
la 26. 1. 41

Dear colleague,

The postal card dated 10. 1 arrived here today, where I am in my position as President of the Romanian Institute. In order to found this Institute I had to be in Berlin at the beginning of September, which means I was not in Cluj at the time the Treaty of Vienna was signed. My people have moved the entire Museum and my personal belongings first to Turda, then to Sibiu. All your acquaintances are now in Sibiu, where I have managed to hold the first meeting of the Museum, before departing for Berlin. Only Dragan's tomb had to be left there.

In mid September I received the assignment, given by the regime that I had to move the University, which I founded in 1919, from Cluj to Sibiu and Timişoara (The Faculty of Natural Sciences). The task was not easy, because we had to leave in Cluj not just the buildings but also the largest part of the furniture and working tools, and Sibiu provided only three barracks and a gymnasium. Despite all this, we managed to hold together, as we did every year, the festive opening ceremony on November 10 and 400 students were enrolled only at the Faculty of Medicine.

In these times of misfortune that came down upon us we still managed to find some enthusiasm to work, which gives us confidence in a better future.

My people from Cluj are still working at the Academy's Dictionary and at the beginning of March the first volume from ALR II (Petrovici), which is already printed, will appear. Pop's second volume of ALR I is expected in May or June.

From Christmas onwards I will be in Berlin again, where I run the Institute. The University is managed by vice-rector Procopovici. Because there are so many things to do here, I don't have the time to handle my own scientific work.

Thank you for wanting to discuss about the Romanian language. I couldn't have wished for a better reviewer.

In case you will be writing to Sandfeld and Brøndal, please send my regards.

Many greetings and thanks for the beautiful words on my people.

Yours truly,

"Sextil Puşcariu"

It is important to make another observation. This letter is written a couple of months after the Treaty of Vienna which was signed in August 1940, and which transferred North Transylvania to Hungary by the two powers that dominated at that time Europe: Germany and Italy. Alf Lombard, although, generally speaking, little preoccupied by political problems, manifested himself publicly in favor of the Romanian people. In 1942, he published an article in the Swedish press, *Några ord om den transsylvanska frågan* (*A couple of words on the issue of Transylvania*), in which he defends "the rightly rights of Romanians over Transylvania, rights that have infamously been violated by the Treaty of Vienna, which led to a separation of Transylvania in two", as he says in *Minnen*. The article, translated by an unknown person, appeared in several Romanian newspapers and was broadcasted on Romanian radio stations. Puşcariu's sadness, as it was seen in the letter above, which describes, dry and bitter, the tribulations behind the resettlement of the Museum of Romanian Language and the University of Cluj, is sweetened by Lombard's attitude. A line such as "Only Dragan's tomb had to be left there" expresses all the tragedy of those terrible times.

After the war, in January–March 1947, Alf Lombard responds to a joined invitation by the University of Bucharest and Cluj with a new trip to Romania, "a journey rich in tiring events", as he qualifies it in *Minnen*, with several conferences held in Cluj and Bucharest, with receiving "The Cultural Merit for Science" and so on. It was the period in which the communists gained power, in a country devastated by war, with a year and something before the King's abdication and the proclamation of the "proletarian dictatorship" in Romania. Alf Lombard was welcomed, in these conditions, with joy; numerous Romanian newspapers saluting his return through enthusiastic articles accompanied by photos; in addition to conferences mentioned above, the (still) Romanian Academy paid him homage and elected him as corresponding member. During this journey, he wrote, from Bucharest, to Sextil Puşcariu who, ill, lived withdrawn at Bran. We do not know the content of this letter but we have Sextil Puşcariu's answer, dated Bran 5, II, 1947.

"Bran, 5. II. 47.

Dear colleague and friend,

Your letter from Bucharest made me very happy, given the fact that we have resumed the contact after such a long time. An attempt of this type failed to succeed during the war. The warm words you use to remind me of those beautiful days, eight years ago, are a consolation for the fact that it is impossible to personally welcome you to my country. If Bran hadn't been so far away and if your time hadn't been so limited, I would have invited you to visit me here.

You would have found an old and ill man, but who, in the time allowed to be active, finds a true pleasure in his work. Yesterday I wrote Rosetti that the second volume of the Romanian Language would be sent in the next couple of days to the Foundation. As for the print, we have to wait a long time, given that now it seems almost impossible to procure the paper for the 400 pages and 50 linguistic maps. When I get back home, in the evening, thinking about the past, I happily linger in Scandinavian countries, which have so many natural beauties and where so many remarkable people live. Jespersen, Sandfeld, Brøndal

and maybe others wait there. To all those alive, but especially to you, whom I deeply care about, my most distinguished regards.

Yours,

"Sextil Puşcariu"

The second volume from the synthesis on Romanian language, entitled *Rostirea*, which Puşcariu mentions in this letter, has an extremely ingrate fate: it was very true that, as the author had foreseen, in those years it couldn't be published, and after the complete installation of the Soviet regime in Romania even more unlikely. There was another attempt in 1959, when editing and publishing was finalized, but copyright was limited for "internal use" and distribution was made on nominal lists; it lasted only for a short period of time, because, almost immediately circulation was recovered and destroyed. Only in 1994 it entered the scientific circuit it was initially destined to.

This last letter is touching as well because of the confession of the "old and ill man", as Puşcariu describes himself, who "finds a true pleasure in his work" and who keeps a live memory of Lombard and the Scandinavian countries to which so many lasting cultural and scientific bounds have been articulated, where so many famous scholars and friends of his lived. However, the brightest memory is reserved to Alf Lombard himself. In turn, Alf Lombard kept alive the memory of the person and of the specialist who Sextil Puşcariu was. So, when in 1945–1955 the impressive monography of the *Romanian Verb* appeared (2 volumes, 1223 p.), his first thought of gratitude went to the two masters: Ovid Densusianu and Sextil Puşcariu, who honored him with their friendship and generously shared their scientific experience.

So, under this bright horizon, it has been kept until today this bound between Sextil Puşcariu and Alf Lombard, two scholars who met and served like no others before them the Romanian language.

Abstract

This paper presents the correspondence between the Romanian linguist S. Puşcariu, the founder of "the linguistic school of Cluj", and the Swedish Romanist Alf Lombard, who dedicated a great part of his energy and work to the study of the Romanian language, becoming one of the best known specialists in Romanian. There have been preserved eleven letters sent by Puşcariu and twelve letters sent by Alf Lombard (between 1935 and 1947). They offer interesting information for the history of linguistics, about their scientific activity and about the political situation in Transylvania during the WWII.

Keywords: *Alf Lombard, Sextil Puşcariu, letters, University of Cluj, University of Lund*.

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